

# LONG ISLAND FORUM



Grace Episcopal Church, Whitestone, of which Francis Lewis, Signer, Was Vestryman  
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Julian Denton Smith, Nature

Francis Lewis, Signer

I read a story in our Diocesan paper "Tidings" that I have not seen in any other paper. December 30 last, the 152d anniversary of the death of Francis Lewis of Whitestone, one of Long Island's Signers of the Declaration of Independence, was named Francis Lewis Day, by legislative resolution.

Accordingly a flagpole erected on the lawn of Grace Episcopal Church, which stands on the site of his 200-acre farm, was dedicated with an address by Supreme Court Justice Charles S. Colden, a member of the church and president of The Bowne House Association which maintains Flushing's "Shrine to Religious Freedom."

Among those present was Mrs. Francis Lewis Bledsoe of Southold, a descendant of Francis Lewis and of General Morgan Lewis, one time State Governor, son of the Signer.

The story stated that Francis Lewis was a vestryman of St. George's Church at Flushing but made no mention of Trinity in New York of which he also served as vestryman during his latter years.

It seems to me that this event should be made a matter of record in the files of the Forum.

John Tooker  
Babylon

**That Samp Mortar Headstone**

Upon reading the letter from Miss Rosetta Terry of Patchogue (January Forum) concerning the samp mortar headstone in the cemetery at Southold, I asked a friend, Mr. Jay Young of Mineola, to accompany me to the cemetery and take a picture of it. I herewith enclose the result. The headstone is that of Charles Floyd Smith.

Jay M. Glover  
Southold

Relative to the samp mortar headstone to which Miss Rosetta Terry made reference in the January Forum, I quote what I said in the October 1946 L. I. Forum:

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# Loss of the Bark Pacific

THE whaling bark Pacific was a strange ship. Purchased from New Bedford brokers, she was brought to Sag Harbor by her new owners in 1864. Casual observation of the dull black whaler failed to reveal anything to distinguish her from other vessels of the same category. There was, however, an indefinable "something" about this whaleship. The crew could "feel" it. The bark was destined to become an ill-starred craft. In sailor's parlance, the

*William E. Glover*

vessel was "an unlucky" ship. Following a thorough re-fitting, the Pacific essayed to go awhaling, but each attempt proved abortive until her third try, when fate intervened for the last time at Behring's Island, in the Arctic Sea, where the ship was totally wrecked.

When the unlucky Pacific cleared Sag Harbor on July 26, 1864, in command of Capt. Samuel Pierson, of Bridge-

hampton, she was already embarked upon a series of misadventures. Officers and crew personnel were comprised chiefly of men from the Captain's home-town and environs.

After weeks of sailing, the Pacific made her first port of call when she put into Pernambuco, Brazil. While there, Capt. Pierson fell desperately ill and died. A veteran whaler, Capt. Pierson had followed the sea since boyhood, and innumerable exploits had taken



Fast to a Whale

From 1953 Xmas Card of Douglas and Victoria Gardner, Sag Harbor

him to many distant places around the globe. But now his voyaging was over, and they buried Capt. Pierson in far-off Pernambuco. The vessel was sent back to Sag Harbor by the American Consulate, and returned from the sad mission early in November of that year. If "coming events cast their shadows before them," certainly the Pacific's maiden voyage presaged ominous portent.

Persevering and undaunted, the bark Pacific cleared Sag Harbor again on Nov. 29th, 1864, under command of Capt. Henry Hunting, of Bridgehampton, bound for the Northwest Coast. The writer's mother, now 89, vividly recalls Capt. Henry Hunting as "a massive man, of towering height, very closely approaching six feet, five inches." It would be difficult to believe that this imposing shipmaster's orders were ever remotely challenged!

On approaching the "Horn," foul weather sprung up and mountainous seas prevailed. The doughty whaleship Pacific rolled, ploughed and wallowed. The albatross of ill-luck, apparently, still pursued her and an atmosphere of grim foreboding hovered over the laboring vessel. Then, when directly off the Cape, the full fury of the storm was visited upon them!

When the gale had subsided the Pacific was "bloody, but not bowed." Excepting for the fact several small boats had been swept away, her bowsprit gone, and foretopm'st toppled, the "unlucky ship" was still seaworthy. There was a note of considerable consolation in Capt. Hunting's later observation: "Had we lost our spars earlier in the storm, we could not have survived."

Under jury rig, the vessel limped home in May, 1865. The following August the Pacific sailed again, in command of Capt. Smith French. This voyage, she kept a rendezvous with complete and total

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# Cold Spring's Wire Service

OVER our teacups we found a common interest, communications; especially that transmitted via key and code. I had enjoyed "CW" as an amateur radio operator; Miss Eva Wright had "pounded brass" at the Cold Spring Harbor telegraph office for fifty years, and from our exciting session of reminiscing came the following bit of village history.

If you wanted to send a message out of Cold Spring prior to the late 1870's, you could get the fastest service by hitching up your best trotter to the family buggy and jogging over to Laurelton Hall on the Oyster Bay side of the harbor. Once you had topped Moore's Hill you could follow the telegraph poles down through Laurel Hollow to the beach and to the large three-storied hotel built by Dr. Oliver H. Jones. This was the nearest telegraph office for Cold Spring folk. Its operator was Stephen Leek and the hotel was managed by the Gerards.

At that time the business section of Cold Spring was along the east shore starting with the Hewlett-Jones Company gristmill, which was powered by water from the lower mill pond via a mill-race along the road's edge skirting the inner harbor meadows. Next to the mill, with a carriage shed in between, was that institution most marvelous to all village children, the general store. This one, managed by Walter R. Hewlett, was the center of most of the village activities.

The 'Liberty Pole' was in the center of the turnaround in front of the store. From there northward along the bulkheaded eastern shore were the homes of Captain George Walters, Captain Jim Wright, the library and fire-

*Andrus T. Valentine*

house, the blacksmith shop, the wheelwright, the residence of Mr. Will White, the barbershop and, across the road, Van Ausdall's Hotel next to the Thespian Hall.

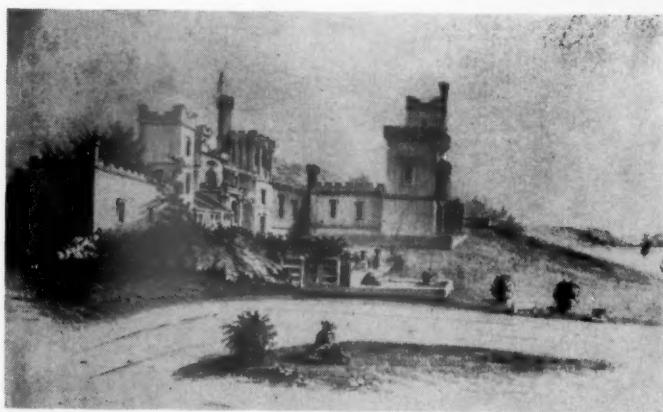
Schooners and sloops with coastal cargoes kept the wharves and slips humming with activity. Captain Jim Wright's house was at the head of the long wharf just north of the store; his two daughters, Annie and Eva, were fairly constant customers at the hard candy counter.

About 1875 Walter R. Hewlett, of the Hewlett-Jones 'industries', decided that the village of Cold Spring should have its own telegraph office and that its logical location was the general store next to the mill. The telegraph company didn't believe the volume of message handling would pay for the installation. The use of the telegraph by summer-boarders at the hotels guaranteed a very profitable return for its investment in poles and wire to such locations; but in the case of the Cold Spring store they told Hewlett that if he wanted an

office he would have to stand all the costs.

Mr. Hewlett not only erected poles and stretched wire from a junction in Laurel Hollow at his own expense, he also hired Stephen Leek away from the Laurelton Hall office to become Cold Spring's first operator. The Gerards were not too pleased. The telegraph proved its worth and became an integral part of the mill and store business. Later George LaRue succeeded Mr. Leek as operator.

Mr. Hewlett had heard that some females made cracker-jack operators, so he selected Miss Annie Wright for training and sent her to Oyster Bay to learn code and message handling under the tutelage of Evie Baylis. When Annie took over the Cold Spring telegraph office, it was moved to the house just north of Captain Jim's home. Here was the new public library, and in a lean-to attached, was the 'Phoenix Pumper.' Miss Eva remembers the childhood thrills of watching the Cold Spring Vamps in their red shirts and leather helmets run the hand-pumper from its



Glenada Castle, Built 1853

Became Cold Spring's Glenada Hotel

shed to the Liberty Pole in front of the General Store. Pumping from the mill-race, they would endeavor to lift their stream over the thirty-foot pole. Ironically, both the buildings at the practice site were destroyed by fire, the store in 1896 and the mill in 1921.

Eva Wright started to pick up Morse code quite early in life by hanging around her sister at the library. Soon Annie had an apt pupil on her hands and it wasn't long before there was a relief operator available. It was well that it happened in that manner, for in the early 1880's the Gerards established the Glendale Hotel on the east side of the harbor, near the present Beach Club, and tried to have the Cold Spring telegraph office moved there. Walter R. Hewlett would not relinquish it. So a private office was established at the Casino of the hotel for use by its guests, and the Gerards succeeded in hiring Miss Annie Wright as operator! She ran the office at the hotel in the summer and one in the city during the winter. Eva was ready and waiting to take over the Cold Spring office at the Library.

About 1890, Dr. Oliver L. Jones repossessed a small building in Huntington through a mortgage transac-

tion, and moved it to Cold Spring. (It is now a barbershop) Dr. Jones had the telegraph office moved there, and soon afterward the post office (John Dole postmaster) was crowded into the small building. Miss Eva ended up by occupying a cramped corner behind a battered desk. It didn't appear that anyone could possibly crowd any more income producing enterprise into such a small space—but Doctor Jones could! In 1900, Cold Spring's first telephone pay-station was jammed into another corner, and Eva had to answer incoming calls. This caused no end of trouble, as callers from outside the village would ask her to deliver messages all over town.

The next location of the telegraph office was in the building west of the Lockwood home and store on Main Street. Mame (Mary) Lockwood had been librarian there until her marriage in 1908. At that time Eva took over her job as librarian, and moved in her telegraph key also.

Telegraph traffic probably reached its height shortly after Otto H. Kahn, the well known international banker, built and occupied his 'castle' (now the site of Eastern Military Academy) overlooking the harbor. Miss Eva recalls

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# Frostfishing By the Handful

THE 7th of December 1955 paid off the frostfishermen. It is a date to be remembered for that day frostfish put in an appearance the like of which had not been seen for years.

I always hesitate to mention frostfishing even though it is an ancient rite on Long Island. The narrating of honest-to-goodness accounts of frostfishing always brings laughter and mild ridicule similar to that encouraged by the most preposterous fish story. And thus with this article I might as well prepare myself for the "tumult and the shouting."

For a day or two before December 7th rumors had been seeping up from the beach that the frostfish were being caught and that they seemed to be in good numbers. Prospective fishermen formed little groups and arranged car pools to get down to the shore. I had a meeting of the Nassau County Historical Society scheduled for that night over in Westbury. I dressed immediately after supper and drove down to Jones Beach to watch the fishing. None of the groups of fellows I wanted to find had arrived—at least

Julian Denton Smith

none was in Field No. 1. So I took my flashlight and hiked to the oceanfront. A father and son passed me on the way back to their car dragging a heavy burlap bag and carrying two garden rakes. That surely looked like good fishing to me!

At the water's edge I still could not find any of the men I had expected and I flashed my light back and forth along the advancing waves as they slid up the beach. These were sort of practice shots with the light, nothing very serious about them. Suddenly the light picked out a fish stranded on the sand awaiting the next wave to get back to the sea. I did not have even a pair of rubbers over my shoes, but the fish was up the beach far enough that I got him without much more than moistening the soles of my shoes. Having nothing to put him in, no pail, no sack, no basket—as I had not planned to do any fishing, I threw him up beyond the reach of the waves.

I worked the edges of a few more waves and before I knew it another fish showed on the sand, and I got him,

too. These were whiting and about 15 or 16 inches long. I had to bring them back to the car and had only hands to do it. It is a long walk and the night was cold, so good, fur-lined gloves swung a fish on either side of me and held each off that my flapping Duffer coat would not brush them to appropriate a fish smell. The flashlight was jammed in a pocket. I put the fish on the floor of the trunk and went back for more.

In driving to the mainland I stopped at the tool booth to give the attendant a couple of fish for we had kidded about the frostfishing when I came down through the toll. My fish went to Westbury with me and were cleaned and prepared after I returned home. They were delicious at supper the next night.

My experience was no isolated case as it was repeated time and time again that night all along Jones Beach from the Inlet to Cedar Beach. One chap I know picked up a bushel basket of frostfish. Others were satisfied with a pailful. Everyone seemed to get whiting and about the size

Continued on page 58



Hemlock Beach Lifesaving Station in the 1890's

**Samp Mortar Headstone**

Continued from Page 42

"Near the east end of Willow Hill Cemetery in the western part of Southold village, there stands a



Charles Floyd Smith's Headstone

**Visitors Welcome**

The General Museum-Library of the Suffolk County Historical Society, at Riverhead, is open daily (except Sundays and Holidays) from one to five P. M.

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Monumental Work

samp mortar minus the pounder and sweep to mark the last resting place of Charles Floyd Smith. It is a granite mortar and formerly stood in the yard of its owner at Cutchogue. In his will he directed that the mortar should be inverted when relocated in the cemetery as his gravestone. However, those who arranged for his unique memorial wisely disregarded his testamentary wish and set the ever durable samp mortar firmly on its base as it was designed to stand. There it will doubtless remain throughout the ages serving as a bathtub for enumerable generations of feathered creatures, and as a relic of one of Long Island's most practical institutions."

Dr. Clarence Ashton Wood  
Senior Contributing Editor

For more than a generation preceding his death in 1924, Charles Floyd Smith was a well-known farmer, horse-trainer and an auctioneer of repute throughout eastern Southold Township.

Usually driving a team of spirited horses before a two-wheel cart, "Charlie Floyd" (as intimates knew him), always cut quite a figure dashing through town! Possessing an average education, nevertheless he had at his command an eloquent—almost encyclopedic vocabulary, which served him well in auctioneering. He could sell anything from a farm and stock, to a lady's diary! Deliberate in motion, he was equally

so in his quiet, precise and erudite speech. Affecting a neatly-trimmed mustache and carefully cropped beard, some saw in Mr. Smith's physiognomy a startling resemblance to that of the renowned scientist, Charles Darwin.

No auction under the auspices of Charles F. Smith was really authentic unless a clear cut of his features appeared in an upper corner of the advertising posters! As an erstwhile printer's devil on a local paper, I recall one occasion when, inadvertently, we failed to insert his likeness. Mr. Smith observed in withering tones, "No picture? — Preposterous! Without it, there can be no auction." The posters had to be run over again, this time WITH the picture. Needless to say, more care was exercised in future.

Wilson L. Glover  
Southold

It is a pleasure to renew my subscription to the Forum. I know something of what it is to get it together and sift it out. Best wishes to Dr. Wood. David M. Griswold, Silver Springs, Md.

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# Roads, Stages and Taverns

I HAVE been asked a number of times to write more about old roads. A number of years ago the late Mrs. Edward P. Buffet wrote a long article about Smithtown Township which she read before the National Society of the D. A. R. It was later printed in the Port Jefferson Times. Recently a friend kindly copied this from an old copy of the Times. Part two of this article was about early roads and from it I have taken some interesting items.

Governor Nichols was the first one to plan a road from Southampton to Brooklyn and it was finished in Governor Andros' time. Mrs. Buffet here quotes from Onderdonk's "Long Island in the Olden Times":

"March 5th, 1772.—A stage will run from Brooklyn Ferry to Samuel Nicolls' on Hempstead Plains, where passengers will stay all night, fare, four shillings. To Epenetus Smith's at Smithtown, four shillings. To Benj a m i n Havens' in St. George's Manor, four shillings, and stay all night. To Nathan Fordham's, Sag Harbor, six shillings. Thus a passenger may be conveyed 120 miles in three days and over a pleasant road for 18 shillings."

Horses were changed near the Head of the River at an inn kept by a man named Jean. The place is called 'Jean's Old Lots'. The second night was spent at Epenetus Smith's in Smithtown. The widow Blydenburgh kept a house of entertainment not far from Epenetus. About forty British troopers came to the widow's one day, and demanded dinner. "Lordy me", exclaimed the widow "Don't come to a poor, lone widow; go over to 'Netus' yonder; there is plenty there." The troopers went and, I guess, cleaned out his supply. (If 'Netus' found out that the widow had sent

*Kate W. Strong*

them, I think he must have been pretty angry.) It was at this Widow Blydenburgh's that President Washington stayed when he made the tour of Long Island.

In the year 1744, Dr. Alexander Hamilton made a journey through Long Island. He names some of the inns at which he stopped: at Jamaica, the Sign of the Sun; at Huntington, the Half Moon and Heart, kept by one Plat; five miles east of Huntington, the Sign of Bacchus; at Smithtown, a tavern kept by a deaf landlady; at Setauket, in Brookhaven, Buchanan's.

Mrs. Buffet tells that she found, in an old paper, that William Taylor kept an inn, in the western part of the township, licensed by an order of Lieut. General Robertson of the British Army, October 1st, 1782. The tavern bills speak of bowls of cherry toddy, nips of grog, quarts of rum, half-shillings, etc.

At the time that this was written, there was a tract of wilderness between the railroad and the turnpike, and reaching from Phillips' Mill to the Huntington line. Indian Head, a small settlement in this district, was long the

home of Solomon Smith and his descendants. It was so called because of a stone head, said to have stood on the edge of a pond and worshiped by the Indians. It disappeared, but no one knows exactly how or where.

A little to the north of Indian Head, in a hollow marked by some white oaks, was a place called Fiddlers' Green. thereat lived a 'yellow man' who played the fiddle so wonderfully that the rumor went around that he had made a bargain with the devil. They even said he had a spot on his side and that, when this spot grew to encircle him, the devil would claim his own.

There was another man who lived still deeper in the woods who was said to keep, as a house pet, a black snake ten feet long. Such are a few of the items from Mrs. Buffet's article.

## Who Eats Starfish?

Mr. Dockow's eulogy to Horseshoe Crab as a delectable dish in the January Forum, prompts me to ask if he or anyone else with a roving appetite ever indulged in starfish, and if so, would he or they recommend broiling, frying, chowder, pickled or smoked?

(Mrs.) Anne Chovie  
(pen name)



Blydenburgh House, Smithtown, was Old Time Tavern

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## Who Knows the Composer?

At Christ Church, Oyster Bay, a carol has been sung each year for seventy-five years, during the Christmas season. We all love it and it wouldn't be Christmas to many of us if it were not included in at least one service. Strange to say, none of us knows its origin. In passing it on to the next generation we would like to be able to tell them why it has become a tradition. I wonder if any Forum reader could enlighten us. Here is the first stanza:

It is Christmas Day by the river,  
 It is Christmas Day by the bay  
 And the soft winged snows they  
 are falling

On the ocean far away.  
 From the hand of God they are  
 falling,  
 Snowy doves on this Christmas  
 Day

On the havened waves of the river,  
 On the ocean far away.

As one of a group engaged in  
 restoring historic Raynham Hall  
 here, we find the Forum very  
 helpful.

Mrs. Miner C. Hill  
 Oyster Bay

## Liked Dr. Wood's Article

I read Dr. Wood's article about  
 the Rev. Moses Baldwin ("Forgotten Cleric of Southold," Dec.  
 1955 Forum) with a great deal of  
 interest. On Sunday, December 11,  
 our Old First Church Bulletin con-  
 tained a pleasing reference to the  
 article.

L. Barron Hill  
 Southold

Note: Supreme Court Justice  
 Hill has been a subscriber to the  
 Forum since its inception eighteen  
 years ago. Editor.

## Upstate Treadmill

Was much interested in the  
 treadmill article in the November  
 Forum and the comments by  
 readers in later issues. When I was a  
 boy on the farm at Stamford-in-  
 the-Catskills there was a dog-  
 power treadmill and in the milk room  
 we had a dog-power sweep. What  
 relics they would have made now.

George Montgomery  
 Owego; N.Y.

## Sloop Wreck of 1876

Almost eighty years ago there  
 was a tragedy in Jones Inlet  
 which cost two lives. On Friday  
 Nov. 10, 1876 the little sloop E.W.  
 Hulse of Youngport (now Great  
 River) was bound out and down  
 the inlet, loaded with clams for  
 the New York city market. On  
 board were John Saunders, captain  
 and part owner, Charles Saunders,  
 his brother, and Joseph Mansell,  
 brother-in-law and part owner.

Continued on next page

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Trying to pass over the bar the sloop was capsized, Charles Saunders and Munsell were washed overboard and drowned, the clams were washed out of her. This was about seven in the morning.

At ten the sloop Hamlet, Capt. Wm. Smith, from Bay Shore, passing down the inlet saw the wreck, went to it and found a man apparently dead, but after an hour's work he was revived. This was John Saunders, who it seems when the sloop went over became tangled in the main sheet. By clinging to it he had managed to keep his head above water. Capt. Smith took him on to New York and sent him home by train.

The aftermath of this was that John Saunders lived to a good old age. I think he was past ninety when he died at Islip, in spite of his terrible experience. A daughter was born to the widow of Charles Saunders the following February and was named Jane. She grew up, married Benjamin F. Abrams, who is still around and in the automobile business in Huntington, but Jane died in 1939.

James E. Tooker  
Town Historian  
Babylon

## Miss Strong's 17th Series

The 17th series of Miss Kate W. Strong's "True Tales from the Early Days of Long Island" has been reprinted in pamphlet form by the Long Island Forum and is now available at \$1.25 postpaid by ordering directly from Miss Strong, "The Cedars", Setauket, N. Y.

The edition is as usual limited in number and copies should therefore be ordered without delay by those who wish to be assured of obtaining one. The pamphlet is profusely illustrated and attractively compiled.

Miss Strong has been writing for the Forum since 1940. Today most of the pamphlets that have preceded this one have become items for the collector but their greater worth lies in the great wealth of source material she has taken from old documents and records which have been preserved by the author's family, in some cases for many generations, and now in her private collection.

## Thank You Very Much

You have over the years made a priceless contribution to Long Island in your publications. Keep up the good work. Generations to come will hold you in most grateful memory for perpetuating the history of our beloved island.

George W. Hildreth  
Riverhead

Note: Former District Attorney Hildreth has been a Forum subscriber since its birth more than 18 years ago. Editor.

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Whenever Welfare Island is mentioned, some people think of it as the site of a prison, but long before that era this narrow strip of land near Hell Gate in the East River was owned by the old Long Island Blackwell family whose colonial homestead still stands there.

Soon after the English conquest of New Amsterdam in 1664, the island became the home of Col.

Manning who was in command of the Battery at the south tip of Manhattan. Following the recapture of New York by the Dutch in 1673 and the capture of English Governor Francis Lovelace, the latter charged Manning with treason. Nevertheless, it was shown that Manning had only 80 regulars to oppose 1600 Dutch troops which had been landed from 28 ships in upper Manhattan, and that Lovelace was away at the



Blackwell Homestead Built in 1680's

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time of the bloodless assault, of which he had no knowledge until returning to Manhattan several days later and being made a prisoner of war.

When the English again took over things in 1673 Manning regained his East River island home and there he died, leaving the estate to his daughter Mary who in 1676 married Robert Blackwell, a native of Worcestershire, England, who had first settled at Elizabethtown, N.J., and in 1655 become a freeholder of Newtown on Long Island. He was a widower with several children at the time of his marriage to Mary. A member of the Church of England and an outstanding citizen of Newtown, he brought Mary Manning to live in his fine home there. In time they had thirteen children.

As the family began to increase, they built a home on Mary's island estate and soon thereafter it became known as Blackwell's Island. Their white three-storyed farmhouse with an ell for the kitchen sprawled along the waterfront. It was an ideal location for a home as the little island had its own meadows, bountiful with salt-hay, so beneficial for the cattle. There were fresh springs and stone quar-

Continued next page

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**The Blackwell Homestead**

Continued from page 52

ries. Their slaves planted orchards and vegetable gardens and erected a large barn, cowsheds and a "cyder mill". Shade trees and gardens of herbs and oldfashioned flowers completed the lovely picture.

But with all the things they had on their little island, the Blackwells still had to cross an arm of the river to attend St. James Church at Newtown in which, incidentally, the Episcopal Church had its beginning on Long Island. There is a family tradition that in going to church across the shallow water the Blackwells used two large rowboats drawn by a team of horses, led by slaves. This was in keeping with the family's rather unusual life. Jacob Reeder, for instance, while courting daughter Ann Blackwell, thought nothing of swimming to and fro. The old homestead was frequently the scene of quilting bees, corn huskings and dances, and many a maid must have plighted her troth under the trees.

The lovely old home remained in the family for 142 years until in 1828 it was sold to the city for use as a prison. In 1929 it passed to the Department of Hospitals

and its name was then changed to Welfare Island. But even yet, surrounded by imposing modern buildings, within stone's throw of East River's busy traffic, there remains a certain poise and charm about the old homestead. When I visited it not too long ago I rejoiced that in its living-room remained the broad fireplace, the white wainscoting and the mahogany trim of colonial days.

If the old house could have talked to me, what a wealth of information about my ancestors I would have obtained.

(Miss) Hildegard Lemcke  
Flushing

**Cold Spring's**

Continued From Page 46

that she handled a steady flow of coded cables in addition to straight messages for the family. In order that the Kahns might count upon uninterrupted service, they had a key cut in for her at her home, which was then on Main Street opposite Turkey lane. The Wrights had built there in 1894.

When the new brick library was opened to the public on March 13, 1913 at its present location, Miss Eva was again behind the desk as librarian and telegraph operator. Her sounder and key functioned for the village until 1930, when the office was discontinued by Western Union and traffic from and for Cold Spring Harbor was handled through the Huntington office. Miss Eva Wright remained as librarian until 1953.

Cold Spring Harbor's history gratefully records Eva Wright's lifetime of dependable service as its telegrapher and librarian.

**Liked Miss Overton's Story**

I was interested in the article on Sarah Rapelje (by Marion F. Overton, in September 1955 Forum) who was the sister of my great-great - great - great - great - great - great - grandfather, Jeronimus de Rapalye.

Mrs. Jasena Rappleye Foley,  
Syracuse

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A Canadian girl, Isabel Mc-

Lauchlan, who came to New York to study at the Traphagen School of Fashion, graduated in 1954 right into a job as designer for Lubin-Weeker Company, manufacturers of Weldon Pajamas which is the trade-name under which these nighttime styles are sold. Isabel found both career and romance — she is now Mrs. Donald E. Messinger.

Examples of her designs are included in the 1955-56 section of the over-a-thousand costumes in the Traphagen Museum Collection. The pajamas are the gift of the manufacturer to the school. Some pieces from the collection are always on view in constantly changed displays at Traphagen, 1680 Broadway (at 52nd St.), New York, and these exhibits are open to visitors without charge.



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Isabel McLauchlan

#### Rare L. I. Books

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Gabriel's Evolution of Long Island, 194 pages, folded map, published by Yale 1921.

Thompson's Long Island, 2nd edition, two volumes, 1843.

Refugees of 1776 from L.I. to Ct., Mather.

In Old Southampton, Abigail Fitchian Halsey.

Personal Reminiscences of Men and Things on L.I., by Daniel M. Tredwell, two volumes, 1912.

Social History of Flatbush by Gertrude Lefferts Vanderbilt, 1909.

Thompson's History of Long Island, first edition, 1839, one volume.

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## Loss of Bark Pacific

Continued from page 44

disaster. On July 3, 1866, the Pacific piled up on a reef in the Arctic (or Behring) Sea.

In accounting to the ship's Sag Harbor owners Capt. Smith French reported the wreck of the Pacific as follows:

"In a dense fog we struck twice, very lightly; immediately luffed to by the wind, but in about fifteen minutes she brought up on the bottom. Every possible exertion was made to get her off by carrying out anchors, and breaking out aft to lighten the ship. But it was all in vain, as the tide was falling faster than we could lighten the vessel.

"At 2 p.m. the fog lifted sufficiently for us to see the land. The Pacific was on a reef, or rocky point of Behring's Island, about one mile off shore. We must have had a very strong current setting on the W.N.W., as our course through the night was from two to four points off shore.

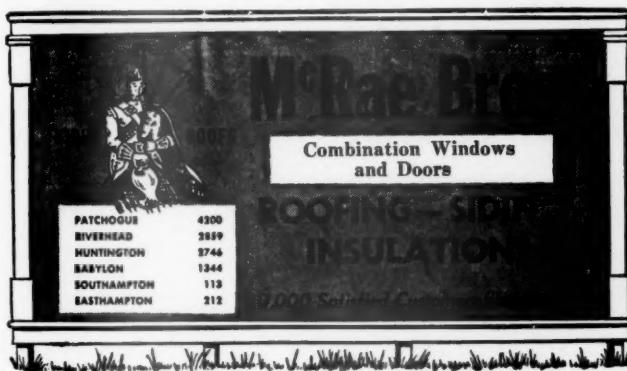
"At 5 p.m. the tide had fallen so that she fell over to

port and bilged. By 7 p.m. there was five feet of water in the hold. Throughout the night we got together some twenty-five barrels of provisions, three casks of bread, spare spars, light sails, etc. which we took ashore on the morning of July 4th. At 2 p.m. of that day all hands left the ship for shore. We erected a large tent and prepared to make ourselves as comfortable as possible under the cir-

cumstances. Thence we were employed as follows:

"July 5—Busily engaged in getting what we had saved to higher land in a more secure place. Did not encounter any inhabitants of the island.

"July 6—At 8 a.m. men in three boats started out to locate any inhabitants. The third mate, Mr. Chester S. Hoadley, was left at the camp with eleven men to build up one of the boats, that we



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might make the passage across to the mainland if necessary. Went up the east coast around to the north side of the island. At 5 p.m. we espied huts and people. We pulled in and landed at a small fishing village. Our party were very kindly received by these natives, who proceeded to inform us by signs that the principal town was on the west side of the island, but

that it would be most dangerous to go around in the darkness of night. A messenger was dispatched to the town and the Governor arrived at 10 p.m. He informed us that a ship was due from Sitka in five days.

"July 7—At 8 a.m., accompanied by the Governor and forty natives, we started by an island route for the chief town on the west side. By dint

of wading and poling, tracking and lugging, we reached our destination at 7 p.m. Once we had to unload the boats and carry them on men's shoulders more than two miles over a steep hill or small mountain. The feat would have occupied us at least two days without the aid of the natives. On arrival at the town, preparations had been made to receive us in the

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shape of a good warm supper, with a house for the men. There was plenty good, fresh fish for them. With my officers, I had accommodations in the Governor's Mansion and we all dined at his table.

"July 8—Rainy, very bad weather.

"July 9—Mr. Sayre, with a native guide, started overland for our camp near the ship.

"July 11—The native returned. Mr. Sayre, he reported, was so lame he could scarcely walk.

"July 12—Sent our boats around the island to the camp to fetch provisions.

"July 14—In company with the Governor, I crossed the island back to our camp, and returned on the 15th. Mr. Hoadley had the boat finished and said he would bring all supplies, provisions, etc., around to us within two days.

"July 16—A sail in sight, and working into the harbor. At 3:30 p.m. boarded bark Wakemoff, Capt. Arkimandertroff, who very kindly consented to transport myself and ship's company to Sitka. He informed us that although he had very little room, he felt impelled to take us as it would be quite impossible for us to remain on the island all winter. He would sail in three days.

"July 17—At 3 p.m. the cooper arrived from camp. He stated that on the previous morning Mr. Hoadley, with the other men at the camp, had started with two boats loaded with provisions and clothing, for the coast of Kamschatka. He informed me further that all my books, charts, and greater part of my clothing had been left on the beach. As there was not time to procure these items before the ship sailed, we were forced to leave them.

"July 29—We sailed from Behring's Island. Arrived Sitka August 23rd.

"October 17—Sailed for Honolulu on board the brig

Constantine, Capt. Dengin. As space was limited, myself, first mate, second mate, cooper and two of the crew took passage; the remainder of the crew will come in another vessel."

One of Sag Harbor's most illustrious whaling voyagers, Capt. Smith French remained a whaleship master until the very last period of that once great industry. He was a brother of Hannibal and Stephen B. French, noted shipping agents and owners. Capt.

Smith French died on August 10, 1882, barely three weeks after his friend, Capt. James L. Austin, who passed on July 20th of that year.

It is indeed a privilege and pleasure to receive your most interesting publication. Mrs. Louis E. Harfin, Jamesport.

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## Frostfishing

Continued from page 47  
of the ones I had. I heard of very few ling being caught.

As far as I can learn three fish are considered frostfishing, whiting and tomcod. On the beaches we find the ling and whiting; the tomcod appear in the Sound and the Hudson. The ling are usually mixed in with the whiting. They have a few whiskers something like fresh - water bullheads. They do not have as good flavor as whiting; there is more of the cod taste.

Tomcods are fished for, they do not lend themselves to the land operation of the other two frostfish. I went over to a wharf in Flushing to observe tomcod fishing. Hooks are baited and lowered into the water about every yard on both sides of the pier. Each line is equipped with a small piece of wire bent in such a way that the line passes through and, under gentle pressure, jingles a little bell supported by the wire. The fishermen set the lines and then take refuge from the chilling wind in back of shanties, crates and piling on the wharf. Whenever a bell tinkles all hands rush out and tend the lines. The tomcod are smaller than ling and whiting.

Many times as youngsters, my brother and I have gone frost-fishing with my father at Far Rockaway. We wore high boots, putting them on at home and walking to the beach a mile and a half away—that was before automobiles. We pulled along a little express wagon in which were scapnets, burlap bags and a kerosene lantern for each person. No one knew about electric flashlights then.

We came on to the beach at Roche's Baths, a bathing pavilion at the foot of Broadway. Sometimes we crossed to the oceanfront by way of the trestle, a wooden structure used by the open-air trolleys that operated during the summer months between the Far Rockaway railroad station and the beach.

I do not remember ever picking up frostfish from the sand. We always sloshed around in the water where the waves ran less than a foot deep. We would catch the fish in the scapnets when they swam into range of the lantern light. Some people used eel spears, but we never owned any of those things. Others took them out of the water with ordinary garden rakes.

One night we caught so many that the little express wagon fairly groaned hauling them home. We decided to put some down in brine for use later on. My father cleaned the fish and my mother salted them in a big stone crock. Something went wrong with the batch for they spoiled. I know now what the trouble was. The bones of frostfish, like those of bluefish and probably weakfish, will rot and turn to gelatin in contact with salt.

Whiting are very easy to filet. After gutting and removing the head, the fingers may be run down either side of the backbone disengaging the flesh. The bone then lifts out in one piece leaving solid sides of meat. I am told there is a way of yanking the backbone out without first loosening it, but I have not learned to do the job this way. The backbone is almost the only bone in whiting and the others are easily found and removed before eating.

We usually pan-fry frostfish although the chunks of meat make a wonderful chowder along with sliced potatoes, onions and a piece of salt pork. A little bacon fat helps to bring out the flavor. Whiting hold together better than you think when fried in deep fat.

I do not know any way to predict the appearance of frostfish. They are most abundant in November and early December—the frost months. They seem to come into the surf feeding on tiny moss-bunkers. Perhaps the surf water is colder than elsewhere as the frostfish become sluggish and dumb and unable to han-

dle themselves properly in the waves.

The best night to frostfish appears to be when a north-west wind has flattened down the waves. Then there is not much churning and it is easier to see the fish in the shallow water. Also with such a wind the area to be watched is reduced due to the wave-wash being held back by the wind. I do not believe the air temperature has to be unusually low to bring the frostfish into the shore. I think it is more a question of hunger and food supply.

Frostfish do not like sunlight. They arrear, it seems, only after the coming of darkness and before the first hints of daylight. I have never fished for them late at night but understand they are just as plentiful as in the evening. Tomcods do not behave like the southshore frostfish. They are likely to set the little bells jingling any hour of the twenty-four.

There is possibly another factor contributing to bringing frostfish into the surf in the dark hours. The darkness is protection from enemies. If frostfish were cast up on the sand between waves in the daylight, sea gulls would pounce and promptly render the fish incapable of knowing or caring whether the next wave ever reached them.

Frostfishing is good fun, and how you do sleep after a couple of hours of it!

### Treadmills

I was interested in the letters about old treadmills in recent issues. I think I had written you some time ago about the one that used to travel around and do our threshing when I was a youngster down in Greenport.

I enjoy the Forum very much and some of its articles have given me the ideas for some of my stories in our shop paper at the Bird Machine Co.

Clifford O. Young  
Walpole R.F.D.  
Mass.

Note: Mr. Young enclosed some clippings of his "yarns" from the shop paper. We wish he'd put us on his mailing list, for he is certainly another Will Rogers when it comes to good rural humor. Edi.



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### Recalls "Tiger Town"

I remember that as a boy there was a small colony of decrepit homes on either side of Hendrickson avenue in Valley Stream. The more respectable element in the village called it Tiger Town because of the drinking, feuding and fighting that took place there all too frequently. Much of the time the residents of Tiger Town were unemployed, but occasionally they would find work with a very highly skilled "horsemen" who collected the dead animals, sold their hides for leather and the meat to a commercial trout pond on Dutch Broadway. Sometimes, however, the horsemeat was too "high" even for the fish, in which case it was generally dumped off in a nearby woods which made an ideal setting for crows, a boy and a gun.

Tragedy came to Tiger Town on a beautiful Decoration Day morning, back around 1900, when the 11:20 a.m. train struck a tallyho loaded with young people from Brooklyn on a Sunday School outing. The high vehicle drawn by four horses was crossing the railroad at Merrick road when the locomotive ploughed into it, killing five persons and injuring others.

Several residents of Tiger Town were eye-witnesses to the tragedy and later served on the Coroner's jury. A roadhouse near the scene of the catastrophe soon thereafter adopted the name of The Tally Ho Inn as a grim reminder of the affair.

Tiger Town, however, disappeared a few years later when real estate developers acquired the property and dispossessed the tenants and squatters. Among the latter were a father, mother and two daughters who chose a nearby railroad embankment, dug a cave and made it their home, like animals in a burrow, until expelled by the authorities.

George E. Hart  
Wading River

### Breath of Fresh Air

The Forum is like a breath of fresh air, and I would feel lost down here, without it. I wish you and the Forum a happy new year, and all the success possible.

Louis T. Vail

New Port Richey, Fla.

Note: Mr. Vail is widely known as a student of New York State history and genealogy. Editor.

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